AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (Canceled)

2. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 68 ~~1~~, wherein the calibration includes at least one correlation between a known content level of the component determined by *in vivo* measurement and a near infrared reflectance spectra of the feedstuff containing that component.

Claims 3-5 (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 68 ~~1~~, wherein the feedstuff is cereal, corn, soybean cake, oleoproteinaceous flour, animal meal, animal byproduct, fish meal, cereal byproduct, or silage corn.

Claims 7-11 (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 68 ~~1~~, wherein the at least one component is total or digestible methionine, lysine, cystine, threonine, tryptophane, valine, isoleucine, phenylalanine, histidine or arginine.

Claims 13-14 (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 68 ~~1~~, which comprises presenting one or more menu options for selection by the customer in making the customer request.

16. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 15, which comprises presenting to the customer menu options for the report format of the prediction report.

17. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 15, which comprises presenting to the customer menu options for the category of feedstuff represented by the spectrum.

18. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 15, which comprises presenting to the customer menu options for one or more components whose content level is to be predicted.

Claims 19-24 (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 68 ~~1~~, which comprises reporting the prediction to the customer within 24 hours of the customer request.

26. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 68 ~~1~~, which comprises reporting the prediction to the customer within 10 minutes of the customer request.

27. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 68 ~~1~~, wherein the customer request and the prediction report may be exchanged 24 hours a day.

Claim 28 (Canceled)

29. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 68 ~~1~~, which comprises providing the customer with one or more identity and/or security codes for use by the customer in making a request.

30. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 29, which comprises verifying the one or more identity and/or security codes upon receipt of a request.

31. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 68 ~~1~~, which comprises storing the customer request ~~, fee information,~~ and prediction report of one or more customer requests.

32. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 31, wherein the stored information may be retrieved by the customer upon request.

33. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 32, wherein the stored information may be retrieved by the customer on a Web site.

Claims 34-64 (Canceled)

65. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 68 ~~1~~, further comprising providing a central database with calibrations based on samples taken from geographically diverse regions, wherein the calibrations of the central database comprise the specific database calibration for predicting the content level of the component.

66. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 68 ~~1~~, further comprising providing a central database with calibrations based on materials produced in different seasons of the year, wherein the calibrations of the central database comprise the specific database calibration for predicting the content level of the component.

Claim 67 (Canceled)

68. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

electronically receiving a request from a customer to predict the content level of at least one component in a feedstuff, wherein the request includes a near infrared reflectance spectrum of the feedstuff and the component is selected from proteins, total or digestible amino acids, gross or metabolizable energy, total or retained phosphorous, an impurity and a toxin;

comparing the spectrum to a specific database calibration that correlates known content levels of the component in other feedstuff to known near infrared reflectance spectra specific of the other feedstuff

predicting the content level of the component; and

electronically reporting the prediction to the customer;

said method further comprising determining that an outlier exists when the prediction of the content level of the component has a degree of error that exceeds a predetermined threshold value; and

~~A method as claimed in claim 67, further comprising~~ providing the prediction report to the customer at no cost ~~when the prediction of the content level is determined to be an outlier~~.

69. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 68 ~~67~~, further comprising:

presenting, when the prediction of the content level is determined to be an outlier, an offer to the customer to perform a measurement of the content level of the component based on a sample of the feedstuff; and

in response to an acceptance of the offer by the customer, measuring the content level of the component in the sample of the feedstuff and reporting the results of the measurement to the customer.

70. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 69, further comprising correlating a near infrared reflectance spectrum of the sample of the feedstuff with the measured content level of component to produce calibration data and adding the calibration data to a central database to enrich the database for handling future customer requests.